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ABSTRACT

This speech presents educational accountability as the unending search for ways in which educational institutions can better serve both students and society. In the face of financial cutbacks, it is suggested that institutional self-examination is in order. Redefinition of end goals with far greater rigor and realism is essential. Following an overview of new budgetary commitments, career education is presented in light of its response to the needs of students. It is presented as human fulfillment in pursuit of useful occupations as a part of the liberalizing thesis of all education. Both the financial reevaluation and emphasis on career education are viewed as major steps toward educational accountability. (MJM)

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"HANGING TEN" AND HIGHER EDUCATION

By S. P. Marland Jr.
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You have chosen for the theme for this conference accountability in higher education. A short definition would be to ask whether our institutions are doing what they mean to do, and whether the patrons and society are deriving their money's worth in the process. There is no doubt that the theme is timely, for already the signs of austerity have set in --- both in numbers of dollars and numbers of patrons.

Austerity, I shall argue, has its uses -- in higher education as in the pursuit of even "higher" things. And austerity, these days, is the bracing air we all breathe.

But for most of us a little austerity goes a long way. After a while we reach the point where, like latterday St. Anthonys in the desert, we find that the more we deny and discipline ourselves the more we are almost unbearably beset by visions of earthly delights.

So I'm delighted, for a day, to trade the rigors of Washington for the languors of Waikiki -- and to join you in these limpid Pacific latitudes. However, I suspect that rather than loosening ties and opening the collars of Aloha shirts, we

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are more likely to engage in a discussion of belt-tightening, for we have arrived at a melanchololy point in history when the need for economizing is the inescapable and overriding fact of our professional lives. I think it can fairly be said that, for our institutions of higher education, that fact is especially difficult to deal with. After decades of spectacular growth, sustained by an apparently unlimited supply of faith and funds in all sectors of our society, they cannot easily adjust to the discovery that neither that faith nor those funds are inexhaustible. After decades of simply adding new departments and new programs on top of old ones, they cannot easily undertake the unaccustomed task of pruning out some activities and paring down others in order to add or expand more important and effective ones.

Yet, I could not dwell upon the dour theme of fiscal stringency as the principal message, heavily though it rests upon us. Nor do I see it as a dreary downward curve, leading to despair. Arduous, even agonizing, as these belt-tightening exercises must be, they are both essential and long overdue. No institution can, under even the most favorable of circumstances, expect to enjoy unrestricted drawing rights upon the regard and the resources of the public or private constituency without, sooner or later, being required to account in quite detailed terms that those rights are deserved and worthy. In every aspect of our national life -- in our economy as in our environment, in government as in private industry -- we have begun to learn the hard lesson that our resources are finite and

that more is not necessarily better. The proposition that "whatever is is good" --- and more of it is more good --- has some validity as an axiom of philosophy, but it no longer works -- if it ever did -- as a principle of finance for the president of a company, for the president of a college, or for the President of the United States.

So we face a new necessity, in a time of limited means and uncertain ends, not simply to make ends meet or to match means and ends, but to redefine our ends with far greater rigor and realism than ever before. And there is, in this necessity, a rare opportunity for institutional self-examination --- to submit all of our assumptions and aims and efforts to the most searching scrutiny, and to emerge from that process stronger and more supple and more stable --- perhaps more responsive to what society expects of us. Howard Bowen, the Chancellor of the Claremont University Center and the man responsible for the program of this meeting, put it well recently when he wrote: "The institution that can use fiscal necessity to prune the irrelevant, to find better instructional methods, and to achieve new cooperative relationships with other institutions . . . --- will emerge in the next decade as a leader."

New York University seems to me to be a fine example of an institution that is actively pursuing Chancellor Bowen's leadership formula. Jim Hester, who is struggling manfully and, I believe, successfully, to put his straitened school on a pay-as-you-go basis, has summed up his experience in these words: "The disease has been diagnosed. The prescription has

been made. We are taking the medicine. It is very painful, but it is possible."

The Federal government is in the midst of a similarly uncomfortable reassessment of its role in higher education. That reassessment, I must stress, is far from complete; but it has, as the President's new budget requests demonstrate, already resulted in some significant shifts in priorities. The new budget asks $1.8 billion for postsecondary education --- $116 million more than the fiscal 1973 level and 36 percent over the fiscal '72 level. Nearly all of that money, some $1.6 billion of it, would go into direct student aid. Almost a billion is for Basic Opportunity Grants to help some 1.5 million needy students attend the postsecondary institution of their choice. The budget also includes $15 million for the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education --- aimed at encouraging the kinds of reforms and innovations in higher education that will enable institutions better to meet the diverse needs of both students and society.

At a time of sweeping cutbacks in the Federal budget, it is important to note that while the proposed OE budget for higher education programs in FY '74 is markedly different from previous years, it nevertheless continues to go up. I have mentioned Basic Opportunity Grants --- up $337 million over FY '73. The Developing Institutions program remains at a level of $100 million, $48 million higher than in FY 72. The Trio programs (Upward Bound, Talent Search, and Special Services for Disadvantaged Students) remain at $70 million, an increase

of $14 million when compared with the FY 72 budget. Cooperative education is also at the $10 million level in FY 74 compared with $1.7 million in FY 72.

New commitments in the budget have called for trade-offs which curb or drop programs that do not fit the Federal initiative any longer. Among the casualities are Language and Area Studies, library programs, and funds for land-grant institutions.

The budget thus reflects the conviction that the most important Federal roles in higher education are 1) to ensure equal access to postsecondary education for all students and 2) to improve the ability of postsecondary institutions to respond to the call for change if they choose to -- in a word, to promote greater equality and quality in higher education.

The Basic Opportunity Grants, as you know, would go straight into the hands of students themselves and thus empower them to enter any postsecondary institution, whether it be a liberal arts college or a technical training institute, whose entrance requirements they can meet. Together with the work study and the loan programs, they make a package that would -- for the first time in our history -- permit every single student to afford the postsecondary education he or she is otherwise qualified to undertake. They would, in short, guarantee genuine equality of opportunity in higher education in two vital respects: 1) They would open postsecondary education up to every student regardless of financial status; and 2) They would open it up regardless of the kind of postsecondary

institution the student desires to enter. They would, at long last, put the affluent and the indigent, the aspiring engineer and the fledgling draftsman, on equal footing in vast and increasing areas of postsecondary opportunity. These are the ideals underlying the BOG's proposal. Many may challenge the means and measures of implementing this drastic new dimension of Federal aid to education, but I doubt that many would quarrel with the basic goals.

While the student aid programs would thus open the doors of postsecondary education to all, we hope through the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education to have some very real impact upon what happens to students once they get inside those doors. We intend, with this Fund, to encourage both a greater diversity among institutions and a more effective use of resources within them. In pursuing these goals, we will seek to stimulate and support the kinds of basic structural change that would bring favorable changes to the institutions involved, responding to their own wishes to change.

I recognize that the higher education community is concerned over the fact that the new budget contains no requests for funds for institutional support. It may well be, in future years, that the Federal Government can and should supply direct support in some form for all our institutions of higher education. It is conceivable that the Basic Opportunity Grants program could increase the financial pressure upon at least some institutions to the point where they felt compelled to raise tuition. That would, of course, defeat the purposes of the program, and we should not let that happen. This may trigger

some kind of institutional support in the future. But at a time when Federal resources are limited, and when the Federal role in higher education is still in the early stages of policy formulation, our clear responsibility is to put our money into those programs of the highest priority and the greatest promise -- programs to equalize opportunity and to encourage reform. We will continue to seek a sound long-term Federal policy for higher education and we will carefully consider the report of the National Commission on the Financing of Postsecondary Education which hopes to complete its work in 8 to 10 months.

We are, in our review of Federal higher education programs and priorities, drawing upon the excellent advice and assistance of a nongovernmental task force made up of people of diverse expertise and headed by Frank Newman of Stanford, who directed an earlier task force that issued the so-called "Newman Report" on Higher Education in 1971. Following that appropriately controversial report, we asked Frank Newman to take charge of a second task force to recommend ways in which the Federal Government might address the problems pinpointed by the first task force. This month we have reaped the first fruits of their labors in the form of three detailed sets of recommendations: the Federal role in graduate education; a proposed G.I. Bill for Community Service, and ways of developing the kind of data base we need to make more informed decisions concerning higher education.

Significantly, the report on graduate education recommends

that we do just what we are doing on the undergraduate level: put money directly into the hands of students and, for the most part, tie it neither to particular institutions nor to particular fields of study. In the current parlance, we would "let the voucher float," relying on the open enterprise system of higher education to respond. It is, I think, a very real question whether or not we will in the near future be able to afford at the graduate level the sums of money that such an effort would surely require, and we may need to consider very seriously the proposition that graduate students should invest in their own futures, in the expectation of increased incomes as a result, rather than rely on Federal grants or institutional resources.

Indeed, in an editorial essay in the current issue of Newsweek, Kingman Brewster of Yale argues most persuasively for just such an approach --- an approach that would permit the graduate or professional student, in Brewster's words, "to invest in the education he thinks is worth the price, even though neither he nor his parents can meet its full cost during his years of enrollment."

We will continue, in any event, to wrestle with these and other unresolved issues of national policy in higher education and, in doing so, we will continue to give great weight to the recommendations of the Newman task force -- as well as to the recommendations we receive from the higher education community generally. Regular meetings with higher education representatives are now being held to help us forge the policy of the immediate

as well as long-term future.

The new budget, in the meantime, represents the early returns in our effort carefully to map out the directions in which the Federal Government should be going. Underlying that effort is the conviction that, at all levels of education today, no more important task confronts us than to make a far better match between the interests and abilities of a huge and diverse array of students and the capacities of our educational institutions fully and fairly to serve those students -- and a far better match between the kind of education these students are offered and the realities and requirements of the society in which they must both live and earn a living.

Perhaps the most significant force pushing us toward policy reform is the student. Lawrence Cremin, one of the most distinguished historians and scholars of education today, met with our top managers in the Education Division last week to help us think about Federal policy. Cremin, drawing upon Margaret Mead, said: "There may be a transformation going on as an anthropological phenomenon: whereas the elders once established the values and the policies for the young, we are now finding the young influencing our values as elders." He said that young people are now coming to our institutions with their agendas, expecting us to respond. They are not particularly satisfied with our traditional agendas. If we do not respond, they go where they get response.

To help stimulate our responsive ability, I have for several years advocated the theme of career education, a concept

aimed at helping bring about a match between learning to live, in its liberal arts tradition, and learning to earn a living in the vocational or professional tradition. This concept may have meaning for the agendas of the young. I have confidence that it does. Although I have talked about career education mainly in terms of the elementary and secondary levels, it is an inclusive notion that applies to all levels of education. Indeed, a number of postsecondary institutions are seeking precisely that kind of match between life and learning, student and society, philosophy of life and facts of life, that career education seeks to engender. W. Theodore de Bary, for example, the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost of Columbia University, has just proposed a broad revision of the curriculum that would combine the University's programs of general and technical studies and thus offer, in his words, "both specialized training in the humanities to start from the first years of college and continue through university education." I understand that the Claremont Colleges, under the leadership of Chancellor Bowen, are contemplating similar changes in at least some of their programs.

They appear to be responding to Alfred North Whitehead's admonition of more than 40 years ago. "The antithesis between a technical and a liberal education," he said in 1929, is fallacious. There can be no adquate technical education which is not liberal, and no liberal education which is not technical: that is, no education which does not impart both technique and intellectual vision. In simpler language," he added, "education should turn out the pupil with something he knows

well and something he can do well."

Balancing Whitehead, hear the distinguished psychiatrist, Dr. Bruno Bettelheim. "That Western society can afford to put economic considerations second to human needs is the greatest achievement of our technological age. It allows us, for example, to stop thinking of education in terms of greater earning power; nothing is more destructive to education for human purposes than to educate (solely) for economic ones. If we think of high school and college as means of fitting us to a job or ensuring a higher income, that is all they will yield. Nothing is more alien to the good life than to make man fit for a job when the real problem is to make the job fit for man -- or fit for a wife and mother."

Career education embraces both Whitehead and Bettelheim. It is certainly not limited to job-getting. It is human fulfillment in pursuit of useful occupations as a part of the liberalizing thesis of all education. I suspect that all would agree that the vast majority of human beings do not enjoy an independent income and must spend their best energies and hours trying to earn a living. Economic considerations are thus very much a part of a fulfilling human life. And if it is, in fact, alien to the good life to educate a man or a woman simply and solely to fit a job, it is equally alien to the good life to educate a man or a woman as if they were never going to have to get and hold a job, or as if their undeveloped native and naked resources were enough to enable them to do so. We do not need to deny the philosopher in a man in order to develop the

stonemason in him --- or the chemist or nurse.

As we have thus far formally developed it at the Office of Education, the concept of career education applies principally, as I have said, to the elementary and secondary levels through the community colleges have traveled some distance on this trail already. In the elementary grades, students explore the many career fields open to them under such broad categories or clusters as health sciences, or the fine arts and humanities, or the contracting field. As they enter high school, they are familiar enough with each of these 15 major clusters and with their own interests and abilities to begin to center their efforts upon three or four of these general skills. By the time they leave high school, whether or not they intend -- at that time -- to go on into postsecondary education, they will take with them at least one solid, marketable skill. As we further develop this concept we will undoubtedly need increasingly to turn our attention to ways of improving articulation of career education between the high school and postsecondary levels including two-year and four-year institutions.

Taking a cue from the lessons learned from the highly motivated and purposeful World War II veteran under the GI Bill in the late 40's and 50's, we predict that the graduates of our high schools under the career education mode will come to your institutions with a considerably greater sense of mission and correspondingly more productive scholarship.

We will also be encouraging postsecondary institutions to emulate the excellent examples of Columbia and Claremont and

fashion programs that recognize that, for most people, the opportunity to live a full life cannot be divorced from the ability to earn a good living. It is high time we rid ourselves of the absurd assumption that, because one student is engaged in contemplating the eternal verities, the need to acquire some more mundane skills or training is beneath him -- and that because antoher student is involved in the acquistion of some practical skill, the contemplation of the eternal verities is beyond him.

Thus conceived, the concept of career education does not require that we abandon our concern for intellectual excellence or integrity, or our commitment to Socrates' conviction that "the unexamined life is not worth living." It requires, rather, that we cease regarding this concern and this commitment as the private preserve of a few, or as solely the subject of a narrow academic discipline. It requires that we regard a liberal and an occupational education as mutually inclusive and mutually reinforcing rather than rigidly exclusive. It requires that we begin to think of education as something much more than simply a process of unnatural selection, insuring the survival and success - within the academies at least -- only of those who best fit the prevailing academic mode. It requires that we end the artificial separation between the eternal verities and the inexorable necessities of a useful and purposeful life. It requires that we begin, in a realistic sense, to educate the whole man -- both the Picasso and the pipefitter in him --- in terms of the self he is capable of becoming and of the society

in which he must live and work. It requires, in sum, that we try to enable a student to make the best match possible between his own needs and interests and those of his society -- to find and fulfill himself in the teeming and changing world.

I imagine there is, right now, in a wave off Waikiki or Makaha a surfer trying to "hang ten" -- to use the expression that means to execute one of the most difficult maneuvers in surfing, a maneuver in which all 10 toes hang over the nose of the surfboard -- and so to achieve that exquisite harmony between rider, board, and the inexorable forces of nature that is the splendor of the surfer's art.

We seek, I think, something like that exhilarating harmony of man and his skills, driven as we are in our institutions by the inexorable forces of ever-higher expectations. There are many to whom we are accountable --- students not the least. But the transcending accountability is to ourselves. Your task and mine is the unending search for ways in which we can help our educational institutions better serve both student and society. We in the Federal part of the system are trying to strengthen our services to you in finding those solutions.

Mahalo and aloha.

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